

**Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families**

Program Office: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE)

Funding Opportunity Title: Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HHS-2008-ACF-OPRE-YE-0031

CFDA Number: 93.575

Due Date For Letter of Intent: **04/14/2008**

Due Date for Applications: **05/13/2008**

Executive Summary:

Funds are provided for Child Care State Research Capacity cooperative agreements to support Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies' analyses of administrative data; data improvements, including linking data across programs; and measurement of the effects of CCDF on program outcomes.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Legislative Authority

This cooperative agreement is funded under the authority of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended, and is authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-161).

Funding Opportunity Description

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) has five primary goals: (1) to allow States flexibility to develop child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within the

State; (2) to promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions on the child care that best suits their family's needs; (3) to encourage States to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care; (4) to provide child care to parents trying to achieve economic self-sufficiency; and (5) to assist States in implementing health, safety, licensing, and registration standards established in State regulations. Among the expected long-term outcomes of the CCDF are: 1) improved employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for parents; and 2) increased availability of high quality care for low-income working families, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients/leavers, and those at-risk of needing TANF. For more information on CCDF, please visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/law/index.htm>.

Since 2000, Congress has appropriated about \$10 million per year of CCDF discretionary funds to be used for child care research and evaluation. These funds have supported projects that add to our knowledge about the efficacy of child care subsidy policies and programs in supporting employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for parents, and promoting positive learning and school readiness outcomes for children. Previously funded State research capacity projects assisted State CCDF Lead Agencies, in partnership with research organizations, to design more effective programs by tracking outcomes for children and families. For more information about previously funded projects, please visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/research/index.htm#capacity>.

The goals of the Child Care State Research Capacity cooperative agreements are:

1. ***To improve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of CCDF data.*** Improving data collection, analysis and interpretation is essential for providing research-based evidence to inform policy and programmatic decision-making at the State and local levels. Beginning with an assessment of its current CCDF administrative data systems and research needs, each State, Territory or Tribe funded will develop and implement a plan for improving its capacity for data collection and analysis and conducting policy relevant research. During the first budget period, some States may need to focus primarily on enhancements to CCDF reporting systems to ensure their administrative data are valid, reliable, and useful for policy analysis. Other States with more refined child care data systems may concentrate on developing improved capacity for analyzing

and interpreting administrative data, conducting research, and using data to inform policy and program decisions.

2. ***To develop or improve analytic linkages with other State and local data systems (e.g., CCDF and TANF).*** Building data capacity across programs that serve similar families is important for understanding the interactions between programs including coverage, gaps in services and the cycling on and off programs. Such linkages can inform how to best direct multi-program policies most efficiently to support the needs of low-income families and children.
3. ***To encourage collaboration among State policymakers and research institutions.*** States are expected to **establish** or **expand** a child care research, analysis and coordinating function, either as a unit within State government or through a contractual relationship with an outside research organization or university. Because most States do not have the resources to conduct detailed policy research, these projects encourage partnerships between researchers and State lead agencies to most effectively conduct the child care policy research critical for making program decisions. The proposed staff of analysts must have extensive expertise in strategic planning, developing cross-disciplinary and cross-agency partnerships, implementing systems improvements, using large administrative datasets for research and analysis, and evaluating the implications of research findings for program and policy decisions.

Applicants for the Child Care State Research Capacity cooperative agreements will be most likely to succeed if they address issues of significance related to CCDF services and programs and inform policy decisions and solutions, particularly for underserved populations.

Two specific research questions linked to CCDF performance measures are of particular interest for this year's Child Care State Research Capacity cooperative agreements:

1. What is the impact of CCDF on helping low-income working parents maintain employment and achieve self-sufficiency? *For example, what is the impact of use and duration of child care subsidy receipt as implemented through the voucher system and other assistance programs on employment outcomes? What is the overlap in families receiving child care subsidies and other assistance (e.g., TANF, Medicaid or food stamps) and how do*

2. What is the impact of CCDF on improving the quality of care available and utilized by low-income working parents and at-risk families to support parental outcomes and child well-being? *For example, how are efforts to improve quality of care reaching care settings used by children in low-income households? How does children's participation in different types of child care and early childhood programs support school readiness, school success and child well-being? What are cost-effective quality improvement strategies (e.g., professional development interventions, child care environment improvement strategies) in all settings serving children from low-income families?*

Applicants must address at least one of these research questions. The question of interest and its link to the CCDF program goals **should be clearly stated in the application**. ACF is particularly interested in applications that address Tribal child care. In addition, ACF encourages applicants to consider how the above questions relate to improving child care programs and policies for various sub-populations, including:

- Families receiving TANF benefits, families who have transitioned off the TANF program, and low-income working families at risk of needing TANF;
- Language, ethnic and racial minority families and children, including English language learners and American Indian and Alaska Native families and children;
- Children with special needs; and
- Infants, toddlers and school-age children.

Conference Attendance. The grantee must attend and present a poster at the Annual Meeting of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium each year of the project. In addition, the grantee may be asked to attend the State Administrators' Meeting. Both meetings typically are held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and last approximately two days. The budget should reflect travel funds for both conferences.

Archiving and Publishing. The applicant must agree to archive final data sets, reports, and other research products with *Research*

Connections. For more information on *Research Connections*, please visit <http://researchconnections.org>.

B. Definitions

Budget Period: The 12-month period of time for which funds are made available (i.e., the first budget period would begin September 30, 2008, and end September 29, 2009).

Project Period: The total length of the proposed project, which is up to 36 months. For a 12-month proposed project, the project period would start September 30, 2008, and end September 29, 2009. For a 24-month proposed project, the project period would start September 30, 2008, and end September 29, 2010. A 36-month proposed project would start September 30, 2008, and end September 29, 2011.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

Substantial Involvement with Cooperative Agreement:

A cooperative agreement is Federal assistance in which substantial Federal involvement in project activities is anticipated. Final roles and responsibilities of Federal staff and the successful applicants will be negotiated prior to the award as appropriate to the proposed project.

Roles and Responsibilities of Applicant

Applicant will design and implement a plan to improve data collection, analysis and interpretation of its CCDF data. This plan should include a proposal for establishment or expansion of a research and analysis unit, either within their State agency or in partnership with a research organization or university. Applicants must develop or improve analytic linkages with other State and local data systems to demonstrate their capacity to understand the needs of families across programs that serve similar populations (e.g., TANF and CCDF).

These projects should focus on at least one of the following questions: 1) what is the impact of CCDF on helping low-income working parents maintain employment and achieve self-sufficiency; or 2) what is the

impact of CCDF on improving the quality of care available and utilized by low-income working parents and at risk families to support parental outcomes and child well-being?

States with limited data and research capacity should focus their initial project efforts on analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of their current data systems as related to one of these questions and develop and implement a plan for enhancing their CCDF data to ensure they are valid, reliable and useful for policy analysis. States with more refined data systems should conduct a research study that addresses at least one of these questions including a research design that: 1) clearly identifies the research issue; 2) appropriately links research questions, variables, data sources, samples, and analyses; 3) employs technically sound approaches and protects human subjects, confidentiality of the data, and consent procedures; 4) reflects sensitivity to technical, logistical, cultural and ethical issues that may arise and includes an effective plan for dissemination and utilization of the data; and 5) effectively utilizes collaborative strategies appropriate to project goals.

Applicants will be expected to participate in regular email and teleconference communications with Federal staff to ensure maximum collaborative effort among projects. Applicants will be expected to participate in the annual meetings organized by Federal staff. At the end of the project, applicants will collaborate to produce project materials with application for CCDF administrators.

Roles and Responsibilities of Federal Staff

The Federal staff will monitor the project and provide technical assistance and feedback when necessary. Federal staff will organize periodic consultations and teleconferences to review project activities, to share information, and to promote coordination of the project. Federal staff will schedule and organize annual meetings for applicants. Federal staff and the applicant will work collaboratively to facilitate accomplishment of project goals, including development of final technical approach and study design, identification of key data and research needs, and the establishment of a steering committee to guide key decisions. The Federal staff will facilitate collaboration with other grantees and contractors.

Anticipated Total Priority Area Funding: \$750,000

Anticipated Number of Awards: 3 to 4

Ceiling on Amount of Individual Awards: \$250,000 per budget period

Floor on Amount of Individual Awards: None

Average Projected Award Amount: \$200,000 per budget period

Length of Project Periods: 24-month project with two 12-month budget periods

36-month project with three 12-month budget periods

Applicants may apply for project periods up to 36 months consisting of three 12-month budget periods. Applicants proposing 24-month or 36-month project periods will be awarded up to \$250,000 for the first 12-month budget period and up to \$200,000 for the second and third 12-month budget period, for a total not exceeding \$650,000 for the entire three year project period.

Initial awards will be made for the first 12-month budget period. For 24- or 36-month projects, continuation awards for the second and third 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress by the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal Government.

The need for a two or three year project period should be identified in Section E on the Standard Form (SF) 424, in the project narrative, and in the budget. Applicants proposing 24-month or 36-month projects will receive instructions on how to submit non-competing continuation applications during the first budget period to request funds for the second budget period.

Awards under this announcement are subject to the availability of funds.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

- State governments

- U.S. Territory or Possession
- Indian/Native American Tribal governments (Federally recognized)

Foreign entities are not eligible under this announcement.

Please see *Section IV* for required documentation supporting eligibility or funding restrictions if any are applicable.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Yes

Applicants are required to meet a non-Federal share of the project costs. Applicants must provide at least 20 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. For example, in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting \$250,000 for the first budget period must include a match of at least \$62,500. (To calculate the 20 percent non-Federal share, divide the Federal share by 4. Applicants will be held accountable for the full commitments of non-Federal resources even if they exceed the amount of the required match. Failure to provide the required amount will result in the disallowance of Federal funds. A lack of supporting documentation at the time of application will not exclude the application from competitive review.

3. Other:

Disqualification Factors

Applications with requests that exceed the ceiling on the amount of individual awards referenced in *Section II*. Award Information will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this announcement.

Any application that fails to satisfy the deadline requirements referenced in *Section IV.3.*, Submission Dates and Times, will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this announcement.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package:

Xtria, LLC
Child Care Research Support Technical Assistance
OPRE/CCR Grant Review Team
Attn: Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements
8521 Leesburg Pike, Suite 400
Vienna, VA 22182
Phone: 866-651-6166
Email: opre-ccr@xtria.com

2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Letters of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify the Operations Center (opre-ccr@xtria.com) of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. Please submit the letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.3*.

This information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to review applications. Failure to submit a letter of intent will not impact eligibility to submit an application and will not disqualify an application from competitive review.

The letter of intent should include the following information:

- The number and title of this announcement;
- The names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, email and addresses for the Principal Investigator (i.e. an individual from the lead agency who is largely responsible for overseeing the study design and running the program of research); and
- The name of the Lead Agency.

Do not include a description of your proposed project in your letter of intent.

Format and Organization of Application

The original and two copies of an application must be submitted. Applicants must limit their application package to 100 pages, double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins and 12-point fonts. This page limit applies to both narrative text and supporting materials, not including the Standard Federal Forms (listed below). In addition, applicants must number the pages of their application beginning with the Table of Contents. Pages in excess of the page limitation will be removed and not reviewed.

Applicants are advised to include all required forms and materials and to organize these materials according to the format for their application package, and in the order, presented below:

1. **Cover Letter.** Applicants should include a Cover Letter using official letterhead of the Lead Agency, and including the Funding Opportunity Number, the Title of the Application and contact information for the applicant.
2. **Contact Information Sheet:** The contact information sheet should include addresses, phone and fax numbers and email addresses for all key project staff, including the fiscal representative for the project.
3. Required **Standard Federal Forms and Certifications.**
 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424). Follow the instructions on the back of the form. In Item 2 on the SF-424, check "New". In Item 8a on SF-424, enter the name of the applicant (Lead Agency).
 - Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A). When completing the SF 424A, first year budget period information should be reflected in Section A as new Federal funds. Second and third year budget period information should be reflected in Section E as the first and second future funding period.
 - Assurance Regarding Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 - Certifications Regarding Lobbying (if necessary)
 - Certification Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke
 - Assurance Regarding Protection of Human Subjects
4. **Table of Contents**
5. **Project Abstract** (one page maximum)
6. **Project Description.** The project description should be carefully developed in accordance with the research goals as described in the Purpose and Background sections of this announcement, and the structure requirements listed in *Section V*. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the detailed *Evaluation***

Criteria found in Section V to organize the project summary/abstract and full project description. Project description should contain:

- **Objectives and Need for Assistance.** This section should clearly describe agency's current capacity to collect, analyze and report child care administrative data. This description should include data collection, analysis and reporting required by the State and Federal Government, as well as reports designed for the legislature and other stakeholders. Applicants are expected to describe the current structure, management and process for collecting, analyzing and reporting data. This description should discuss the strengths and limitations of the current operating systems and analysis unit. Applicants should clearly identify the research question addressed and how the agency's data will answer the question.
- **Approach.** This section should describe in detail how the agency will implement the proposed project. Applicants should present their assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of an in-house analysis unit versus a contractual partner and why they have chosen one approach over another. This justification should address how the chosen approach will integrate current information, demands, operations and procedures, management structure, staffing and other resources. Applicants should present a detailed implementation plan describing how the unit will be established, managed, operated, evaluated and sustained after Federal funding has ceased. Applicants should provide a detailed plan that identifies goals and objectives, a workplan identifying specific activities necessary to accomplish stated goals and objectives, and how those activities can be accomplished with the available or expected resources during the proposed project period. Applicants who are prepared to conduct policy research as part of their proposed project must provide technical details on the proposed research design including: 1) conceptual framework; 2) research question, hypotheses, variables; 3) data sources; 4) linkages with other research; 5) data processing and statistical analyses; and 6) product development and information dissemination.

- **Organizational Profile.** This section should present the applicant's management plan for implementing the analysis unit, including how the unit will be structured and managed; how the timeliness of activities will be ensured; how quality control will be maintained; and how costs will be controlled. The roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency should be clearly defined, and applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants. The plan should list the time commitment for each proposed staff position, including consultants and subcontractors. Applicants should include a project timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables by quarter.
7. **Budget and Budget Justification.** Present a detailed budget for each 12-month interval of the proposed project period (i.e., the 12-month budget period to be funded under this announcement and subsequent budget periods that may be funded under a non-competing continuation project). This budget should match the appropriate object class categories reflected in SF 424-A, Section B. A detailed budget justification should describe each line-item expense including the Federal and non-Federal funds. If project funds will be sub-contracted, a detailed budget for the use of those funds must be included. **The line item budget, the budget justification, and the SF 424-A should all correspond with one another.**
8. **Appendices**
- Letter(s) of Agreement
 - Biographical Sketch for PI and Key Personnel

Biographical Sketch: These are used to partially evaluate Staff and Position Data (see *Section V.1*). Inclusion of information regarding the Principal Investigator's and Key Personnel's work and publication history that will address the evaluation criteria is encouraged. Curriculum Vitae would appropriately address this need.

For electronic submissions via Grants.gov, application sections one through seven above are considered part of the mandatory project narrative section.

D-U-N-S Requirement

All applicants must have a D&B Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) number. On June 27, 2003, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published in the *Federal Register* a new Federal policy applicable to all Federal grant applicants. The policy requires Federal grant applicants to provide a D-U-N-S number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003. The D-U-N-S number will be required whether an applicant is submitting a paper application or using the government-wide electronic portal, Grants.gov. A D-U-N-S number will be required for every application for a new award or renewal/continuation of an award, including applications or plans under formula, entitlement, and block grant programs, submitted on or after October 1, 2003.

Please ensure that your organization has a D-U-N-S number. You may acquire a D-U-N-S number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free D-U-N-S number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or you may request a number on-line at <http://www.dnb.com>.

Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

The project description should include all the information requirements described in the specific evaluation criteria outlined in this program announcement under *Section V*. Application Review Information. In addition to the project description, the applicant needs to complete all of the Standard Forms required as part of the application process for awards under this announcement.

Applicants seeking financial assistance under this announcement must file the appropriate Standard Forms (SFs) as described in this section. All applicants must submit an SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. For non-construction programs, applicants must also submit an SF-424A, Budget Information and an SF-424B, Assurances. For construction programs, applicants must also submit SF-424C, Budget Information and SF-424D, Assurances. When required for programs that involve human subjects, the Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption form must be submitted. All forms may be reproduced for use in submitting applications. Applicants must sign and return the appropriate standard forms with their application. The Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) form may be found at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html.

Applicants must furnish, prior to award, an executed copy of the Certification Regarding Lobbying. Applicants must sign and return the certification with their application. The Certification Regarding

Lobbying may be found at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html. (If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit Standard Form (SF)-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.)

The Pro-Children Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. 7183, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where federally funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with Federal funds. The statute does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity. Additional information may be found in the HHS Grants Policy Statement at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_related.html.

Information on the Certification Regarding Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act (PFCRA) may be found in the HHS Grants Policy Statement at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_related.html.

Applicants must make the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. By signing and submitting the application, applicants are providing the necessary certification. Where return of a form is required, complete the standard forms and the associated certifications and assurances based on the instructions found on the forms. The forms and certifications

may be found at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html.

Information on the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C 552) or FOIA may be found in the HHS Grants Policy Statement at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html.

Please see *Section V.1* for instructions on preparing the full project description.

Please reference *Section IV.3* for details about acknowledgement of received applications.

Electronic Submission

Applicants to ACF may submit their applications in either electronic or paper format. To submit an application electronically, please use the <http://www.Grants.gov> site.

When using www.Grants.gov, applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off-line, and then upload and submit the application via the www.Grants.gov site. ACF will not accept grant applications via facsimile or email.

Acceptable electronic formats for the application attachments (narratives, charts, etc.) must use the following standard technologies, i.e., Microsoft (Word and Excel), Word Perfect, Adobe PDF, Jpeg, and Gif.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before submitting an electronic application, applicants must complete the organization registration process as well as obtain and register "electronic signature credentials" for the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Since this process may take more than five business days, it is important to start this process early, well in advance of the application deadline. **Be sure to complete all www.Grants.gov registration processes listed on the Organization Registration Checklist, which can be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/registration_checklist.html.**

Please note the following if planning to submit an application electronically via www.Grants.gov:

- Electronic submission is voluntary, but strongly encouraged.
- Applicants may access the electronic application for this program at <http://www.Grants.gov>. There applicants can search for the

downloadable application package by utilizing the www.Grants.gov FIND function.

- **It is strongly recommended that applicants do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through www.Grants.gov.** Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications well before the closing date and time so that if difficulties are encountered there will still be sufficient time to submit a hard copy via express mail. **It is to an applicant's advantage to submit 24 hours ahead of the closing date and time in order to address any difficulties that may be encountered.**
- To use www.Grants.gov, you, the applicant must have a D-U-N-S number and register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR registration. **REMINDER: CCR registration expires each year and thus must be updated annually. Applicants cannot upload an application to www.Grants.gov without having a current CCR registration AND electronic signature credentials for the AOR.**
- The electronic application is submitted by the AOR. To submit electronically, the AOR must obtain and register electronic signature credentials approved by the organization's E-Business Point of Contact who maintains the organization's CCR registration.
- Applicants may submit all documents electronically, including all information typically included on the SF-424 and all necessary assurances and certifications.
- Though applying electronically, the application must still comply with any page limitation requirements described in this program announcement.
- After the application is submitted electronically, the applicant will receive an automatic acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov that contains a www.Grants.gov tracking number. ACF will retrieve the electronically submitted application from www.Grants.gov.
- ACF may request that the applicant provide original signatures on forms at a later date.

- Applicants will not receive additional point value for submitting a grant application in electronic format, nor will ACF penalize an applicant if they submit an application in hard copy.
- If any difficulties are encountered in using www.Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov to report the problem and obtain assistance.
- Checklists and registration brochures are maintained to assist applicants in the registration process and may be found at: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.
- When submitting electronically via www.Grants.gov, applicants must comply with all due dates **AND** times referenced in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
- For applicants that must demonstrate proof of non-profit status before the award date, ACF strongly suggests that proof of non-profit status be attached to the electronic application. Proof of non-profit status and any other required documentation may be scanned and attached as an "Other Attachment." Acceptable types of proof of non-profit status are stated earlier in this section.
- The Grants.gov website complies with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Grants.gov webpages are designed to work with assistive technologies such as screen readers. If an applicant uses assistive technology and is unable to access any material on the site, email the www.Grants.gov contact center at support@grants.gov for assistance.

Hard Copy Submission

Applicants that are submitting their application in paper format should submit one original and two copies of the complete application. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by an authorized representative, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s).

Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-Federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in

the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information.

If applicants are submitting their application electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review and selection process.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Due Date For Letter of Intent: 04/14/2008

Due Date for Applications: 05/13/2008

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is referenced above. Applications received after 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date will be classified as late and will not be considered in the current competition.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that applications are mailed or hand-delivered or submitted electronically well in advance of the application due date and time.

Mail

Applications that are submitted by mail must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date referenced above at the address listed in *Section IV.6*.

Hand Delivery

Applications hand carried by applicants, applicant couriers, other representatives of the applicant, or by overnight/express mail couriers must be received on or before the due date referenced above, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., eastern time, at the address referenced in *Section IV.6*, between Monday and Friday (excluding Federal holidays).

Electronic Submission

Applications submitted electronically via Grants.gov must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date referenced above.

ACF cannot accommodate transmission of applications by facsimile or email.

Late Applications

Applications that do not meet the requirements above are considered late applications. ACF shall notify each late applicant that its application will not be considered in the current competition.

ANY APPLICATION RECEIVED AFTER 4:30 P.M., EASTERN TIME, ON THE DUE DATE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR COMPETITION.

Extension of Deadlines

ACF may extend application deadlines when circumstances such as acts of God (floods, hurricanes, etc.) occur; when there are widespread disruptions of mail service; or in other rare cases. A determination to extend or waive deadline requirements rests with the Chief Grants Management Officer.

Receipt acknowledgement for application packages will not be provided to applicants who submit their package via mail, courier services, or by hand delivery. Applicants will receive an electronic acknowledgement for applications that are submitted via <http://www.Grants.gov>.

Checklist

You may use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package.

What to Submit	Required Content	Required Form or Format	When to Submit
Letter of Intent	See Section IV.2	Found in Section IV.2	Refer to deadline in Section IV.3.
Cover Letter	See Section IV.2	Found in Section IV.2	By application due date.
Organizational Profiles	See Section V	Found in Section V	By application due date.
Table of Contents	See Section IV.2 and V	See Section IV.2 and V	By application due date.
Project	See Sections	Found in Sections IV.2 and V	By application

Summary/Abstract	IV.2 and V		due date.
Project Description	See Sections IV.2 and V	Found in Sections IV.2 and V	By application due date.
Budget and Budget Justification	See Sections IV.2 and V	Found in Sections IV.2 and V	By application due date.
SF-424	See Section IV.2	See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html	By application due date.
SF-424A	See Section IV.2	See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html	By application due date.
SF-424B	See Section IV.2	See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html	By application due date.
Certification Regarding Lobbying	See Section IV.2	See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html	By date of award.
Certification Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke	See Section IV.2	See http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html	By date of award.
Assurances	See Section IV.2	Found in Section IV.2	By date of award.

4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs:

State Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

This program is covered under Executive Order (Exec. Order) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." Under the Exec. Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

The official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in Exec. Order 12372, including addresses and contact persons, may be found on the following URL:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of prospective applications and receive instructions. Applicants must submit all required materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of this submittal (or the date of contact if no submittal is required) on the Standard Form (SF) 424, item 19.

Under 45 CFR 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application due date to comment on proposed new or competing continuation awards. SPOCs are encouraged to eliminate the submission of routine endorsements as official recommendations. Additionally, SPOCs are requested to clearly differentiate between mere advisory comments and official State process recommendations, which may trigger the "accommodate or explain" rule.

Comments submitted directly to ACF should be addressed to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW., 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20447.

Although some jurisdictions have chosen not to participate in this process, entities that meet the eligibility requirements of the Program Announcement are still eligible to apply for a grant even if a State, Territory, or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC. Therefore, applicants from these jurisdictions, or for projects administered by Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, need take no action in regard to Exec. Order 12372.

5. Funding Restrictions:

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are unallowable.

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Construction and purchase of real property are not allowable activities or expenditures under this grant award.

6. Other Submission Requirements:

Please see *Sections IV.2* and *IV.3* for deadline information and other application requirements.

Submit applications to one of the following addresses:

Submission by Mail

Xtria, LLC
Child Care Research Support Technical Assistance
OPRE/CCR Grant Review Team
Attn: Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements
8521 Leesburg Pike, Suite 400
Vienna, VA 22182

Hand Delivery

Xtria, LLC
Child Care Research Support Technical Assistance
OPRE/CCR Grant Review Team
Attn: Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements
8521 Leesburg Pike, Suite 400
Vienna, VA 22182

Electronic Submission

Please see *Section IV.2* for guidelines and requirements when submitting applications electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed and reviewing the collection information.

The project description is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 4/30/2010.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

1. Criteria:

Part I THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other

applications for available assistance. The project description should be concise and complete. It should address the activity for which Federal funds are being requested. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. In preparing the project description, information that is responsive to each of the requested evaluation criteria must be provided. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

ACF is particularly interested in specific project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

Part II GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING A FULL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Applicants that are required to submit a full project description shall prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria. The text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

Provide a summary of the project description (one page or less) with reference to the funding request.

OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance must be demonstrated and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning

studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as needed. In developing the project description, the applicant may volunteer or be requested to provide information on the total range of projects currently being conducted and supported (or to be initiated), some of which may be outside the scope of the program announcement.

APPROACH

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state your reason for taking the proposed approach rather than others. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

If any data is to be collected, maintained, and/or disseminated, clearance may be required from OMB. This clearance pertains to any "collection of information that is conducted or sponsored by ACF."

Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following are requests for additional information that must be included in the application:

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES

Provide information on the applicant organization(s) and cooperating partners, such as: organizational charts; financial statements; audit reports or statements from Certified Public Accountants/Licensed Public Accountants; Employer Identification Number(s); contact persons and telephone numbers; names of bond carriers; child care licenses and other

documentation of professional accreditation; information on compliance with Federal/State/local government standards; documentation of experience in the program area; and, other pertinent information.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Provide a budget with line-item detail and detailed calculations for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information Form (SF-424A or SF-424C). Detailed calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching is a requirement, include a breakout by the funding sources identified in Block 15 of the SF-424.

Provide a narrative budget justification that describes how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

GENERAL

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. Both Federal and non-Federal resources (when required) shall be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which you are applying. "Non-Federal resources" are all other non-ACF Federal and non-Federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, Federal budget; next column(s), non-Federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

PERSONNEL

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person, provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc.

TRAVEL

Description: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. (This item does not include costs of consultant travel).

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops should be detailed in the budget.

SUPPLIES

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

CONTRACTUAL

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations, including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients, other than States that are required to use 45 CFR Part 92 procedures, must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed at 41 USC 403(11), currently set at \$100,000.

Recipients might be required to make available to ACF pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for

proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each delegate agency, by agency title, along with the required supporting information referred to in these instructions.

OTHER

Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: insurance; food; medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs; space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description and a justification for each cost under this category.

NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES

Description: Amounts of non-Federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 15 of the SF-424.

Justification: The firm commitment of these resources must be documented and submitted with the application so that the applicant is given credit in the review process. A detailed budget must be prepared for each funding source.

TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES, TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES, TOTAL PROJECT COSTS

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The corresponding score values indicate the relative importance that ACF places on each evaluation criterion; however, applicants need not develop their applications precisely according to the order presented. Application components may be organized such that a reviewer will be able to follow a seamless and logical flow of information (i.e., from a broad overview of the project to more detailed information about how it will be conducted).

In considering how applicants will carry out the responsibilities addressed under this announcement, competing applications for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:

OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE - 35 points

The extent to which the applicant:

- Submits a proposal that addresses at least one of the two specific research questions of interest (see *Section I*). If the **applicant does not clearly state and address at least one of these questions, the proposal will receive a score of zero for this criterion.**
- Describes current methods and systems used by the agency to collect and compile child care data required by the State and Federal Government (including data sources, inputs, and reports) and describes the strengths and weaknesses of these systems. Linkages to other data (e.g., TANF, licensing, and resource and referral systems) should be described.
- Proposes a coherent approach to assessing the quality of CCDF data including the data validity, reliability and procedures and policies in place for collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.
- Describes the internal and external information needs of the agency, constituencies for information, and the types of data required or requested by these stakeholders.
- Submits a proposal for a statewide infrastructure for child care policy research that is well conceptualized, feasible, and sustainable beyond the end of the proposed project.
- Describes how the findings will be used to inform policy and improve program services.
- Clearly describes the products to be generated by the project and the benefits that the State and other stakeholders will derive from these products.

APPROACH - 30 points

The extent to which the applicant:

- Describes how to implement the proposed analysis unit to improve the State's capacity for collection, analysis and interpretation of data and conducting child care policy research.

- Presents an informed assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of an in-house analysis unit versus a contractual partner.

And the extent to which the applicant's:

- Justification for selecting the proposed approach is explained in detail, including a description of how the chosen approach will mesh with current information demands, operations and procedures, management structure, staffing and other resources.
- Proposed implementation plan describes the function and scope of activities and indicates when the objectives and major activities under each objective will be accomplished.
- Selected approach and implementation plan are appropriate and feasible and will build an analytic capacity for the agency; and, the extent to which the plan includes a feasible description for identifying research priorities, and determining research studies to be conducted.
- Design for proposed research clearly identifies the research issue; appropriately links research questions, variables, data sources, samples, and analyses; employs technically sound approaches; protects human subjects, confidentiality of the data, and consent procedures; reflects sensitivity to technical, logistical, cultural and ethical issues that may arise; includes an effective plan for dissemination and utilization of the data; and effectively utilizes collaborative strategies appropriate to project goals.
- Implementation plan provides a feasible approach for institutionalizing and sustaining the analytic unit after Federal funding has ceased.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES - 25 points

The extent to which:

- The management plan presents a diagram showing the organizational structure of the project and the functional relationships among components.

- The management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timeliness, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.
- The proposed project director, key project staff and consultants have the necessary skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out responsibilities.
- Staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings.
- The applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience and resources required to form, manage, operate and sustain an analysis unit.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION - 10 points

The extent to which:

- The project costs are reasonable in relation to the activities to be carried out, that funds are adequately appropriated across component areas, and that the budget is sufficient to accomplish the objectives.
- The applicant demonstrates it has sufficient fiscal and accounting capacity, including dealing with unanticipated problems and ensuring that the project will be completed on time.

2. Review and Selection Process:

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application.

Initial ACF Screening: Each application will be screened to determine whether it was received by the closing date and time and whether the requested amount exceeds the stated ceiling. Late applications or those exceeding the funding limit will be returned to the applicants with a notation that they were unacceptable and will not be reviewed.

The competitive review will be conducted in the Washington, DC metropolitan area by panels of Federal and non-Federal expert reviewers knowledgeable in the areas of child care policy research and evaluation. Panels will assign a score to each application and identify its strengths and weaknesses in relations to the evaluation criteria.

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) will conduct an administrative review of the applications and results of the competitive review panels and make recommendations for funding to the Director of OPRE.

The Director of OPRE will make the final selection of the applications to be funded. Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on: (1) the ranked order of applicants resulting from competitive review; (2) staff review and consultations; (3) the combination of projects that best meet the information needs of the program; (4) the funds available; and (5) other relevant considerations.

Please reference *Section IV.2* for information on non-Federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications that are approved but unfunded may be held over for funding in the next funding cycle, pending the availability of funds, for a period not to exceed one year.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates:

Not Applicable

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices:

The successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NoA) document that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-Federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail.

Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter, signed by the Program Office head.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Grantees are subject to the requirements in 45 CFR Part 74 (non-governmental) or 45 CFR Part 92 (governmental).

Direct Federal grants, sub-award funds, or contracts under this ACF program shall not be used to support inherently religious activities such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytization. Therefore, organizations must take steps to separate, in time or location, their inherently religious activities from the services funded under this program. Regulations pertaining to the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which includes the prohibition against Federal funding of inherently religious activities, can be found at the HHS web site at: <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/waisgate21.pdf>.

A faith-based organization receiving HHS funds retains its independence from Federal, State, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs. For example, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide secular programs or services funded with Federal funds without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization that receives Federal funds retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of HHS funded activities.

Faith-based and community organizations may reference the "Guidance to Faith-Based and Community Organizations on Partnering with the Federal Government" at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/index.html>.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services new single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. Unlike previous HHS policy documents, the GPS is intended to be shared with and used by grantees. It became effective October 1, 2006 and is applicable to all Operating Divisions (OPDIVS), such as the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), except the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The GPS covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions and points of contact as well as important OPDIV-specific requirements.

Appendices include a glossary of terms and a list of standard abbreviations for ease of reference. The GPS may be accessed at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_related.html.

3. Reporting Requirements:

Grantees will be required to submit program progress and financial reports (SF-269 found at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html) throughout the project period. Program progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

Final reports may be submitted in hard copy to the Grants Management Office Contact listed in Section VII of this announcement.

Program Progress Reports: Semi-Annually
Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Program Office Contact:

Dr. Kathleen Dwyer
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
7th Floor West
Washington, DC 20447
Phone: 202-401-5600
Fax: 202-205-3598
Email: kathleen.dwyer@acf.hhs.gov

Grants Management Office Contact:

Tim Chappelle
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
8521 Leesburg Pike, Suite 400
Vienna, VA 22182
Phone: 866-651-6166
Email: opre-ccr@xtria.com

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Naomi Goldstein

Director

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Date: 03/10/2008

Naomi Goldstein

Director

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation